

LODDON FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION CONSULTATIVE

Actions and Minutes

DATE Tuesday 20 January 2011
VENUE Swallowfield Parish Hall
TIME 7pm arrive for 7.30pm start 9.30pm finish

Present:

1 Mike Barrass	Farnham Angling Society
2 Simon Bartlam	Wokingham Borough Council
3 Russ Hatchett	Swallowfield Fishing Club
4 Barney	"
5 Dave Pearce	"
6 David Rundle	The Gresham Angling Society
7 Alan Ward	
8 Carl Bustin	Bracknell Forest Council
9 Chris Ralph	Thames Water
10 Peter Timms	21 YOTAC
11 George Loades	"
12 John Crackwell	River keeper
13 Tony Etherington	?
14 Ian Crook	Twyford and District Fishing Club
15 Aaron Mulvany	"
16 Sue Dent	Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership
17 Chris Matcham	Surrey Wildlife Trust
18 Colin Sweeby	City of London Piscatorial Society
19 Roger Sargeant	Adventure Angling Society
20 Scott Nelson	"
21 Dr. Peter Walker	APEM Aquatic Consultancy
22 Alan Hughes	Reading and District Angling Association
23 Paul Wyatt	Farnborough and District Angling Society
24 David Cassell	"
25 Alwyn Huggett	"
26 Richard Lloyd	River Whitewater and Potbridge Syndicate
27 Adrian Ellis	Red Spinners Angling Society
28 Alan Brown	Risley Angling Enthusiasts Angling Club
29 Robert West	"
30 Martin Moore	LFCC acting chair
31 Trevor Blake	Arborleigh Angling Club
32 Dr Adrian Pinder	APEM Aquatic Consultancy
33 Dominic Martyn	EA Fisheries

Apologies:

John Ellis, Patrick Mitford Slade, Amanda Bassett, Wayne Russell, Ian Watson, John Green, Peter Francis

Agenda:

- 1. Welcome – Martin Moore, Acting Chairman**
- 2. An approach to identifying coarse fish habitat bottlenecks on the River Wensum – Dr Adrian Pinder, APEM Aquatic Consultancy**

3. Questions and Answers**4. Fisheries Action Plan Workshops – are we ready? All**

Comfort break

5. Consultative business

- 5.1 Actions and last meetings minutes
- 5.2 Members update
- 5.3 LFCC Website
- 5.4 Thames Fisheries Consultative and the Angling Trust
- 5.5 Fisheries and Flood Risk Maintenance
- 5.6 January and April 2011 meeting talks – Gravel pit management, ecology and water quality, flood forecasting, angling access, stillwater management, writing management plans, hydropower

6. Any Other Business – next meeting date

END

ACTIONS

1. DM to provide wish list to Thames Water for types of people and information for the workshop
2. PW to send example of consultation techniques.
3. DM to put together options brief for techniques for effective consultation, learn lessons from past experience and ensure facilities present to deal with numbers on each day.
4. All to respond with availability on each day, can attend both.
5. IC to put calendar together, need targets...
6. DM to send FAP info to RH and into FAP folder on website
7. DM to update members on progress of last meetings actions
8. Change title of Loddon project to LCAP as majority agreed title should be Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Action Plan

9. FCAP date all agreed - 3 March and 26 March
10. All: can interested Consultative members contact DM for 2011 spawning observations. The EA can provide a service on collection of data from spawning and nursery habitat for management and other purposes. Good data has been collected by fisheries from 2007 to 2010 and can be presented at a future meeting upon request.
11. DM to send Arborfield habitat mapping from Blackwater confluence to Arborfield
12. DM to send barbel report with assessment of scientific research on habitat use by barbel and other coarse fish. See reference page for more information
13. All - details for possible businesses and those not represented at meetings but with influence on stillwaters, canal and rivers and associated watercourses
14. DM to investigate following talk options: Dinton Pastures, 2010 Loddon Fisheries Survey, flood mapping talk discussed with team members and will be reported on soon, Basingstoke Canal fisheries and conservation, Arborfield from inception to completion
15. Site visit/events options - Thames Water, Arborfield, Whitewater chalkstream restoration, Maiden Erleigh, Basingstoke Canal, London Institute of Fisheries Management Sherry Evening Oct 2011 or other meetings, Loddon Valley Residents Association
16. DM to send FAPs approach and impetus
17. DM to assist Adrian Ellis with Management Plan
18. Colin Sweeby CLP site visit
19. Richard Lloyd site visit
20. Derek Brandt comms for workshop
21. Simon Bartlam contact re managing river habitats

Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Action Plan

Purpose: To outline arrangements for the LFCC to conduct its Fisheries and Conservation Action Plan workshops in March 2011, provide examples to LFCC members of existing Fisheries Action Plans (FAPs) and provide a platform for effective consultation and partnership in the protection and improvement of water in the Loddon catchment.

Objectives

Attend FCAP workshop

Draft FCAP for edit and approval

Publication of Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Action Plan

Do work and use plan as a mechanism to achieve a better environment for people and wildlife

Outputs

Workshop
LFCAP draft
LFCAP published
2011 to 20?? targets met

Outcomes
Improved environment
Improved education and participation

FCAP Programme

Invite

Calender

Draft agenda

Consultation document - table of issues

Wey example

Other case studies - Kennet, Cherwell, Colne, Lee

Actions - who's doing what and when

Time: 09:00 to 16:30

Date 1: 3 March 2011

Date 2: 26 March 2011

Location: tbc

Facilitators

Questions welcomed in advance to the steering group and responses to be provided in advance of meeting

MINUTES

1) Adrian Pinder - An approach to identify habitat bottlenecks in coarse fish recruitment: a case study on the River Wensum

Talk summary

- No nonsense approach using techniques developed by APEM Aquatic Consultancy

- General concepts

- Fish and habitat surveys

- Sustainable options other than stocking

- butterflies an example of ontogenetic ecology having various life stages

- although not so obvious in fish same concept applies e.g. sunbleak invasive species

Those stages are:

Opening of mouth

Inflation of swim bladder

Absorption of yolk

Formation of fins

Formation of scales and lateral line organ

= NOW resembling the adults and can use the same habitats as adults.

- Fish require clean water...
- But what constitutes good habitat?
- depends on species and life stage
- still large gaps in our ecology but improvements are being made...
e.g. Hab pref of adult and juvenile barbel.... 1994 (ref? AP) also lack of knowledge of fish in general in lakes and oceans

Wensum Case Study

- famous fishery with barbel one of key species
- some natural and some stocked
- ... Anglers concern over dwindling populations
- Looked at 2005 and 2006 EA fisheries data, but failed to catch 0+ and 1+. Data collected suggests anglers could be right...

Key to successful recruitment

- What is important to fish = 7 key factors or thresholds that need to happen
- 1) N of spawning stock male and female, fit and good sperm and eggs**
- 2) Suitable and accessible spawning habitats**
- 3) Successful deposition, incubation and hatching**
- 4) Nursery habitats**
- 5) Suitable food e.g. summer floods washing zooplankton that first feeders need**
- 6) Summer growth**
- 7) Availability and access to winter refuge...!!!**

2009 egg and larvae survey

- aim to qualify points 1 to 3
- five site survey in early 2009
- how? limited budget and time - reliant on local angling community telling us about fish becoming active
- spots where anglers adamant spawned on... sure enough redds were there, but eggs not necessarily deposited there
- only some spots were used to deposit eggs
- confirm eggs by agitating carefully gravels to collect eggs, check net and take eggs back to lab for species, fertilisation success and stage of development (Please leave fish eggs alone unless we have agreed a sampling method to ensure any fish/eggs killed are killed with appropriate data collected).
- recording habitat - depth and velocity to define suitable spots...

- Barbel eggs confirmed
- Optimum spawning velocity 0.5m per second

- Spawning on glides not riffles and bit deeper
- Minnows laying eggs in the same place (data missing)

Action: DM to send barbel report with assessment of scientific research on habitat use by barbel and other coarse fish. See reference page for more information).

- Juvenile fish survey to qualify remaining 4 to 7 questions

Survey:

0+ barbel to confirm point 4 and 5

1+ barbel to confirm point 6 and 7

Method: location survey, habitat, depth, velocity, substrate, seine nets and electrofishing - reduce anode size to 10cm better for catching small fish

Habitat

1+ 65 - 75 mm fish in main river in slowish glides similar to spawning habitat, gravel sand and silt

0+ specific in shallow < 10cm deep, warmer (by 3oC and more 5-7max?) and slack

Spawning success

- 1) Survey confirmed spawning
- 2) 1+ = survival of 2008 spawning
- 3) Juv - 0+ absent for much of reach apart from Ringland bridge where 20 0+ were found in a slack, shallow, unshaded backwater
- 4) Shallow marginal bays, substrate gravel sand and silt, no flow, no shading
- 5) *Such habitats likely to positively affect survival and growth*

= quantitative habitat characterisation

Next phase to broaden scope to looking further afield in the river to identify bottlenecks to recruitment

Fine to do other work... **But need juvenile habitat**

Method

- 27km river surveyed
 - Ling to Hellsdone
 - Walked on foot, small dingy
 - 4 different reaches between flow control structures possibly not passable to fish
- standard approach developed by APEM = habitat mapping e.g. depth, flow, substrate, cover, temp = look specifically at runs/glides < 50cm, shallow bays for juveniles nice mix of gravel sand and silt, quite a lot of cattle bays but didn't have the substrate of gravel/sand **Action: DM to send Arborfield habitat mapping = GIS outputs. Juxtaposition of habitats critical e.g. must have spawning and juvenile habitat close by.** Interrogate and calculate surface area of habitat types = 94% glide in entire reach. May be good for spawning or juve, but not

good habitat. Barbel spawning habitat 551 m² in 4.9km. Question DM what was the width? AP 12m width = DM therefore c.50m length of river roughly with suitable spawning ground over 5km river = 1%?)

Stretch 1 had 121m² of spawning habitat but no juvenile habitats nearby... = habitat bottleneck

Summary

- 27km Survey

- spawning habitat limited apart from stretch 2
- paucity of nursery habitats
- structures = possible barriers
- = juvenile and spawning bottlenecks

Conclusions

- 1) Spawning and nursery habitat limited
- 2) Solutions = establish baseline
- 3) Identify bottlenecks and prioritise actions
- 4) Implement habitat modifications e.g. spades and bays
- 5) Flow deflectors for spawning
- 6) Monitor population response
- 7) If required take further actions - MB what about **quantity and quality**

2) Questions and Answers

MB - habitat types as percentages in relation to numbers of fish? AP - depends on carrying capacity, surface area, how many big fish, egg deposition, can calculate... DM or look at length of spawning ground and number of fish.

AP barbel bit like salmonids as they live in gravel (DM barbel are intragravel spawners. Barbel do not have sticky eggs. Unlike chub or dace, they spawn within gravels rather than on top of them meaning they are more susceptible to sediment pollution, poor habitat management especially on sub optimal spawning areas and P enrichment as a consequence of diatom or algae growth smothering gravels), better swimmers than dace or bream

RL - failed spawning? AP courtship partly about convincing themselves that its the right place and right time

MB - long lengths of river without impoundments or barriers important? AP - yes dace swim 20miles upstream to spawn, dace ending up back in the estuary. E.g. dace in the Wensum make way upstream. DM upstream migration is a compensation for downstream drift = why people can catch 144lb of dace on the River Wye where there are few barriers if any.

RW - deep stretch of river 25mm mini fry, big heads, top to mid water - what may they be? AP - likely to be minnows as batch spawn as late as september, trout remain as alevins in gravel until April or May after Dec.

CM - any work conducted on the Wensum? AP - financial issues, nothings been done (DM post meeting comment - these reports can provide heavy weight for funding or protection or just development of your angling clubs management over a medium to long term).

TB - initial study to establish baseline. How many man hours for the whole study? AP - did on a tight budget, egg survey 3d 2 staff, July 2 staff in 3d on river, habitat 2 men 8km per day = 3d, on top of that 1 day to digitise each day of habitat. EA were catching the big fish, but we wanted to understand more about the initial life phases. Key is identifying the specifics.

MB - not all need to look at this as anglers catches will tell. When don't we have enough fish? AP - anglers, and habitat mapping

RS - Barbel sizes - 0+ sept 35-45mm, 1+ 65cm +

AP - can't have enough juvenile habitat as natural mortality 99%

IC - if problem with spawning habitat and don't have nursery e.g. Whistley. Beneficial for a club to gather eggs and young and read? No

AH - chub and barbel do they hybridise? AP not compatible, DM seen barbel attempting to spawn with group of chub on the Cherwell (supplies of broodstock limited there!)

MB - same on stillwaters, needs shallow water that warms up. AP - shallow with macrophytes that hold fish. But tench, crucians and rudd wont spawn unless have canadian pondweed or *Myriophyllum* spp. Tench will stay in weed. = **dont cut weed if you want tench to spawn in your lake**

MB how adapted are juvenile fish with evasive action if one were to be cutting or treating weed? AP no, fish will stay put in the weed where they feel safe.

TB - roach appear to cycle, over 8 to 1 years. Concern over 15 years ago plenty of 3-5lb barbel, less fish now but larger, is this a trend with barbel like roach? AP - is a natural phenominon of fish populations. Barbel more specific, roach more plastic (weed/tree roots), barbel conditions have to be right and are more fussy.

AP - trying to convince people about young barbel habitats was challenging but showed slacks important.

MB - spawning key? AP - sufficient flow glide onto riffle (DM upstream on a flow

gradient).

AP - look at what you have in the first place. Baseline...

AP - get to grips with what you have.

ACTION - can Consultative members contact DM for 2011 spawning observations. The EA can provide a service on collection of data from spawning and nursery habitat for management and other purposes. Good data has been collected from 2007 to 2010 and can be presented at a future meeting upon request.

3) Consultative Business

Fisheries Action Plan or is it? DM asked the floor if this plan which has been discussed the last three years would be called the Loddon Fisheries Action Plan or the Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Action Plan. DM explained that it would and should not duplicate other conservation plans such as the Loddon Biodiversity Plan. Conservation relates to the future sustainability of fisheries in looking after the wider environment.

Action: majority agreed title should be Loddon Fisheries and Conservation Action Plan

MB - group size important, should encourage local business to attend, council with no idea on fishery = different workshop for angling and council)

AH - Kennet FAP lost its way due to other projects diluting its effect such as Cleaner Kennet, Kennet chalkstream and Kennet FAP, Kennet SSSI west of Hungerford

Action: FCAP date all agreed - 3 March and 26 March

No of facilitators - 1 to 6 (Sue Dent, DM, IW, John Sutton, other helpers?)

Amanda Bassett, Alison Cross, EA External Relations or other)

PW - techniques to consultation.

Actions:

PW to send example.

DM to put together options brief for techniques for effective consultation, learn lessons from past experience and ensure facilities present to deal with numbers.

All to respond with availability on each day, can attend both.

IC - put calendar together, need targets...

4) Russ Hatchet and the LFCC.org.uk website

Thanks noted for the hard work of Russ, Ian Waton amongst others in getting the website set up and functioning. 80 hits+-

- website running
- forum available to members only with username and password from Russ = straightforward
- majority public view and restricted access for members
- pictures = gallery
- documents...

lfcc.org.uk

Action: DM to send FAP info to FAP site

Action: DM to update members on progress of last meetings actions

AOB - next meeting

- MB Crimestoppers to protect your fishery from theft
- MM Crayfish trapping conference in April

Action: DM to provide wish list to Thames Water for types of people and information....